

**Review**

Up to this point, we have seen that the letter to Titus makes a command for the installation of pastors in the churches of Crete. These must maintain proper qualifications in the areas of family, personal life, and doctrine. The need for such qualified pastors is pressing because there are many false teachers going around ruining families with their works-salvation doctrine.

**1. The Situation on Crete (1:12)**

In short, the situation is somewhat dreadful, if we can believe the testimony of one of their own (we can because 1:13 tells us it is true). He uses strong language to say that the Cretans constantly lie, act like wicked beasts, and are lazy gluttons.

As a result, Titus has his work cut out for him. Not exactly the place you might pick, is it? You might want to start out with a better group? Well, consider that all people are like the Cretans (Rom. 1:13, 15), so it is not just them.

Furthermore, these folks on the island are particularly susceptible to become like the false teachers themselves. With the false teachers' penchant for deceit and looking for an easy income, the lying and laziness of the Cretans are not far off.

**2. The Remedy for the Situation – Sharp Rebuke (1:13a)**

Note that this is directed toward unbelievers. Sharp, rigorous, severe rebuke is limited to that group of people in this text. We need to be careful about using that with God's sheep, for in 2 Cor 13:10 Paul reserves its use for the case that his "letter while absent" does not accomplish his goal. In any case, the "sharpness" is supposed to be meant for edification, not destruction.

The word for rebuke is the same as used in 1:9 for "convict." Titus is thus directed to carry out *his own* pastoral responsibility, just like the qualified elders he is seeking to fill the pastoral positions in the individual cities.

**3. The First Goal of the Remedy – Soundness in Faith (1:13b)**

The rebuke is, first of all, meant to be not punitive but instead is intended to be cathartic, healing, helpful. The goal is that unbelievers would come to a place where they are "sound" in the faith, that is, they hold to the body of gospel truth without holding any error. Their thinking is *free from error*. It is, in other words, *correct*.

This word can be illustrated in a number of ways: If you have a problem for which a series of steps is required for the solution, and you have a correct series of steps, then we can say that your method is *sound*. It is free from error. If the problem is a broken light switch and your series of steps toward fixing it does not include turning off the breaker that powers the switch, then your plan is unsound and as a result, it is dangerous!

**4. The Second Goal of the Remedy – Reject False Teaching (1:14)**

The second goal is that by rebuke, the people there would avoid false teaching. This false teaching consists of two elements:

- A. Jewish fables. Fables are myths or tales. 1 Tim.4 :1-5 and Col. 2:21 give some idea of what these could be.
- B. Commandments of men. Mark 7:13 gives us an idea here.

These men are ones "who" (not "that") turn from the truth. They are apostates. Evidently they have some knowledge of the truth, yet reject it. Horrifying!

One point we may glean from this which is clearly taught in several other places as well, is that *we are not under the law*. When I say "the law" it is clear that I mean "the law of Moses." No believer is under that law today (Rom. 6:14). Such a dispensational change has occurred in this age of grace that it may be said that any attempt to enforce the law on a Christian amounts to a "commandment of men." God has outmoded it and so if a man tries to put you back under it, he is usurping authority that only God has to make a dispensational change.

It is important to note that the adjective "Jewish" along with "circumcision" of 1:10, this helps us to understand the following verses more clearly. Let's see:

**5. Comparison of Pure and Defiled Shows What Sound Faith Is (1:15-16)**

- A. The Pure. Apparently the Jewish fables included the idea of the laws of clean and unclean – say with regard to the Jewish diet. It is a fable that this is necessary to keep those laws today. Consider for proof Rom. 14:14, 20; Acts 10; Mark 7:19.
- B. The Defiled. While these false teachers try to impose the law on the believers, saying that some things are clean and others are not, in fact the tables are turned. For the believer, *all* things are clean. For the unbeliever, *nothing* is clean because his insides are defiled. This makes everything he touches unclean! In fact, they are so bad that:
  - a. Their mind and conscience is defiled. They are, in two words, *totally depraved*. All unbelievers are so. The effect on the mind and conscience is terrible. This explains many concepts in Scripture, such as the fact that no man seeks after God; that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him; and that all reject the general revelation given to them in nature and in the conscience.
  - b. They make a profession of faith but you can tell they are not genuine by their evil works. We learn from this that *faith must produce good works*. If it does not, it is no faith at all. They are repugnant, abhorrent, detestable (other meanings for the term abominable), they are disobedient, and they are unqualified to perform any good work.

Consider the contrast that you as a believer are indeed qualified for good works; in fact, you are ordained to do them. Being sound in the faith therefore means that we understand that we are not under the law, and that while works do not save, the faith that saves does work.

**Conclusion**

In this passage, to further support the explanation of the dire need for qualified pastors, Paul zeroes in on the more specific situation at Crete in verses 12-16. The people there have certain qualities which require correction in order that they would be **sound in the faith**. As a part of this, the folks there need to reject Jewish fables and so-called commandments. Why? Believers have been freed from the laws of the clean and unclean since they are not under the law. The men who bring such false teaching turn from the truth, are totally defiled, and cannot do any good works.